



GENERAL W. A. HANCOCK

HANCOCK.

THE LIFE AND PUBLIC SERVICES

OF

WINFIELD SCOTT HANCOCK,

Major-General United States Army; Democratic Nominee for President in 1880.

BY A. T. FREED.



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LIFE AND PUBLIC SERVICES OF WINFIELD SCOTT HANCOCK.

CHAPTER I.

WINFIELD SCOTT HANCOCK was born near Montgomery Square, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, on the 14th of February, 1824. He is the son of Benjamin Franklin and Elizabeth Hancock; and has two brothers, Hilary, his twin brother, and John, who is some years younger.

When Winfield was four years old, Mr. Hancock removed to Norristown, the county seat of Montgomery County, and here the lad received his early education, amid scenes calculated to awaken the enthusiasm and foster the patriotism of any intelligent boy. Blessed by nature almost beyond parallel, Eastern Pennsylvania might well be called the garden of the Lord. Her rolling fields yield rich harvests to repay the husbandman's toil; her vast sweep of broad champaign and lovely glen, of tree clad mountain and bosky dell, ravish the eye of the tourist; her winding streams—the broad Susquehanna and Dela-

ware, the "Blue Juniata," the placid Schuylkill, and the romantic Wissahickon—are famed in song and story; and beneath her rich soil lie richer treasures in coal and ores than are gathered from the glittering mines of California and Nevada. To the patriotic American, too, the spot is holy ground. Yonder at Brandywine the patriot army gallantly resisted Howe's advance upon Philadelphia. There at Germantown the sudden dash of Washington upon the foe, almost successful, was suddenly turned into disaster. Away to the east lies the place where the brilliantly-conceived and ably-executed passage of the Delaware resulted in the victory of Trenton. And close at hand is the spot which lies nearer to the American heart than any of her storied fields of fame—Valley Forge, the camp in which, when all the heavens were black and all the air was full of dismay, a little band of stern patriots, encouraged and cheered by their loved chief, kept alive the fires on liberty's altar.

Winfield received his schooling at the village academy; but his *education* was largely carried on at home. His parents never entertained the delusion that their responsibility for their children ended when they paid the bills for their clothing and education. The watchful eye was always upon them; and the successful general probably owes more to his father's tireless help, and his mother's loving counsel in those early days than to his native abilities or his own exertions. Winfield was an apt scholar, proficient in all his studies, with a special taste for scientific investi-

gation and an instinct, early developed, for childish parade and the mimicry of war. In the schoolboys' juvenile drills he was always chosen captain; indeed, he was always a leader among his fellows. But he had the respect and good opinion of his elders as well as of his playmates; and it is evidence not only of his proficiency as a scholar, but of his high standing as a boy that, when only fifteen years old, he was selected by the people of Norristown to read in public the Declaration of Independence on his country's natal day.

A circumstance, characteristic of the boy and of his magnanimity and manliness, took place about this time. At school with Winfield was a poor little orphan boy over whom some of the larger scholars were disposed to tyrannize. Winfield at once took the part of the little fellow, fought his battle, shared with him his pennies, and became his hero and idol. Little Johnnie Everman was poor and weak then, and lame as well; but many years later, when all the world was ringing with the deeds of the dashing soldier, John W. Everman, the wealthy and honored citizen of Philadelphia, introduced into the civic council resolutions granting to Hancock a public reception, and the freedom of the City of Philadelphia. With his own hand he presented those resolutions to his former protector in the presence of the chivalry and beauty of Pennsylvania, within the sacred precincts of Independence Hall.

To Major Renniman (Denison) we are indebted for an account of the circumstances which led to Winfield's

selection for a cadetship in the United States Military Academy, the turning point of his life. The Hon. Joseph Fornance, the representative in Congress for the Montgomery District, had the privilege of naming a cadet. A resident of Philadelphia, who nursed ambitious views concerning his son, had moved into the district, and was employing influence to secure the appointment. Among those whose good offices he was desirous to secure, was an eccentric old lawyer, a man of wealth and of much local influence. This lawyer had a high opinion of his Philadelphia friend, and had given him a horse, still fine-looking, but which was too old for the severe work the lawyer required. The Philadelphian was profuse in his thanks, and promised to take excellent care of the animal; and not to work him too hard. Being in Philadelphia on business one day, the donor, to his surprise, saw the horse harnessed to a dray, the driver lashing him to make him pull a load beyond his strength. The lawyer bought him back and rode him home. Passing Mr. Hancock's house, he called that gentleman to the door and abruptly asked: "Mr. Hancock, would you like to have Winfield appointed to a cadetship at West Point?" "Really," said Mr. Hancock, "I have never thought of such a thing. The matter comes upon me so suddenly that I can not answer at once: I must have time to think of it." "Think it over then," responded the lawyer, "and I will call in the morning and learn your decision." A family council was held, and, mainly at Mrs. Hancock's solici-

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tion, the question was decided in the affirmative. The lawyer's influence was potent in the matter. Mr. For- nance submitted Winfield's name for appointment ; and, on July 1, 1840, he entered upon his student life at the National Military Academy at West Point. Among his classmates was Ulysses S. Grant.

CHAPTER II.

Hancock graduated in 1844, and was assigned to duty with the Sixth Regiment of Infantry, with the rank of second lieutenant. He served in the Southwest, on and near the Red River till the breaking out of the Mexican war, when his regiment was ordered to join the army of General Winfield Scott. Hancock was engaged in no actual fighting till near the close of the struggle, when he participated in the battles of Contreras, Cherubusco, Molino del Rey and Chapultepec. Later events in our history have dwarfed the proportions of these engagements; but at the time they were looked upon as very bloody encounters; and the newspapers of that day employed their very largest display type to tell the public that no less than eleven hundred of our gallant men had fallen in the desperate struggle at Cherubusco. But it must be remembered, that to the individual soldier the small engagement is as serious as the conflict which topples thrones and makes the whole world tremble. Hancock received honorable mention and a brevet for meritorious services in those battles.

On the conclusion of peace he was among the last to leave Mexico, when he was stationed near Prairie du Chien. In 1849 he married Almira, daughter of Samuel Russell, a merchant of St. Louis. It is sufficient to say

that his married life has been more than usually happy. Mrs. Hancock has accompanied her husband to most of his posts of duty. A son and a daughter has blessed the union.

After a brief term of service in Florida, the Sixth Regiment was ordered first to Kansas and then to California. The march was made across the continent, and this is probably the longest continuous march ever made by a body of troops. In 1861 the war of secession broke out. At his urgent request Hancock was transferred to the East, though not without delay; and in September of the year named, he landed in New York. Without so much as pausing to visit his parents, he hastened to Washington and reported for duty. The blunder was at first made of turning him into a Commissary; but General McClellan recommended him for a brigade, and after a delay of a few days Hancock received the commission of a brigadier-general and was assigned to duty in the division of General Smith. His command comprised the Forty-ninth Pennsylvania, the Forty-third New York, the Fifth Wisconsin, and the Ninth Maine. His commission bore date September 23, 1861.

In October General McClellan was appointed to the command of the Army of the Potomac, which he proceeded to organize and drill before putting it into the field to fight battles. A discussion of his policy in this respect does not come within the province of this memoir; but it is pertinent to say that Hancock fully approved it.

The Southerners, more familiar with the use of arms than the people of the North, had the further advantage that they had been prepared for war from the beginning of the secession movement. The army of Northern Virginia, too, was flushed with the victory at Bull Run. It was believed that the North, vastly preponderating, as it did, in wealth and in appliances for the production of warlike material, could better afford to wait than could the South, whose means were limited and whose ports were already closed to the commerce of the world. And so for six months Hancock became a drill-master. It must be borne in mind that at this time not only were the privates absolutely raw, but that their commanders were but very little better instructed in the art of war. The few officers who had received a military education, not only were compelled to attend to the executive business of their commands, but were forced as well to become drill-sergeants, to teach the other officers what they in turn were to teach the privates. To Hancock's tireless energy and efficiency during this period of apparent inactivity much of his later success is due.

Early in April, 1862, McClellan moved on Richmond via the York peninsula. The plan was opposed by President Lincoln, who feared that so soon as Washington was uncovered the enemy would make a dash upon it. He reasoned that the Confederates would hold the loss of Richmond cheap, if by the sacrifice they could gain Washington with the prospect of encouraging Maryland to de-

clare for them. He therefore stipulated that a force sufficient to protect the capital should be retained in its front, and this was stationed at Fredericksburg under General Irwin McDowell.

Reaching the York peninsula, McClellan found the enemy entrenched at Yorktown. He ought to have attacked at once; there can be no doubt of that; but he sat down and besieged for a month a place which he could have carried by a *coup de main* in an hour. But McClellan lacked dash and moral courage. He invariably underestimated his own strength and overestimated that of his enemy. The siege was harassing, but not bloody. The people of the country sympathized with the Southern cause and gave all the information in their power to the rebel leaders, while Union officers were almost entirely ignorant of the movements or strength of the opposing force. These people possessed the greater opportunities for gaining knowledge of our force and positions by coming into the Union lines under professions of loyalty, sometimes bringing produce for sale at extortionate prices, and sometimes bringing information never proved to be correct and frequently known to be flagrantly false. One of these gentlemen, named Vollin, was particularly pertinacious in declaring his devotion to the Union cause, and particularly active in bringing in totally untrustworthy intelligence. While on a scouting expedition, toward the close of the siege, attended by a small cavalry escort, Hancock was fired upon by half-a-dozen

bushwhackers. He hastily sent his troopers around to intercept their retreat, while he and his staff rode directly upon the guerillas. The result was that two were killed and a third taken. The prisoner proved to be Vollin. "Good morning, Mr. Vollin; good morning, sir," said the General. "We have been looking for you for some time, Mr. Vollin." The fellow was silent. "I suppose," continued Hancock, "you are aware of the fate usually awarded to spies, Mr. Vollin." "I—suppose—I—am," stammered the latter. "Then you will please prepare for it at your earliest convenience, Mr. Vollin. Good morning, sir."

A few days later, while Hancock was making a reconnoissance toward the enemy's position, at the head of a regiment of his brigade, he came suddenly upon a rebel regiment, scarce a hundred yards from him. Both parties instantly sank to the ground and sought the cover of stumps and trees. The rebel officer in this emergency concluded to practice a little ruse. Carefully instructing his men to lie still and take good aim, he fiercely shouted "Charge!" thinking that at that terrible word the "Yankees" would start from their cover to flee. But the Yankees lay still as the grave. "Charge!" repeated the officer. His men rose; but had scarce reached their feet when a withering volley from Hancock's regiment sent them to the rear at double-quick, and they were seen no more.

By the first of May, McClellan's batteries were nearly

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completed, and the 6th of that month was the date fixed for opening fire. But on the morning of the 4th it was discovered that during the night the enemy had evacuated his works. The pursuit was instant and vigorous. At Williamsburg, Longstreet, who commanded the rebel rear, decided to fight to gain time for the escape of his trains. Hooker assailed him furiously, but was roughly handled. The impetuous Kearny dashed upon him; but, to say the least, gained no ground. The enemy's extreme left was defended by earthworks of considerable strength and protected by an intricate abattis. These works had been abandoned, and Hancock, seeing that they flanked the enemy's line, promptly occupied two of them. At this juncture the rebels came upon him in strong force to drive him out. He held them at bay for some time, but, finding himself very much outnumbered, he called for assistance. General Couch sent him the Tenth Massachusetts. Still the enemy pressed upon him. Hancock pretended to retreat till the enemy was drawn into the open, when he suddenly faced about, poured volley after volley into their astonished ranks, which threw them into confusion. "Now, gentlemen, with the bayonet," cried Hancock. In another moment the command leaped forward, the rebel line broke, and the enemy's left flank was turned. The rebel loss here was between five hundred and six hundred; Hancock's was but one hundred and thirty. Aware of the important advantage gained, and expecting a determined effort to re-take the works, McClellan

sent in strong reinforcements; but in the morning the enemy had retreated. Longstreet's object, however, had been secured; time had been gained to enable his trains to make good their escape; and he had inflicted at least as much loss as he had sustained.

Hancock was the hero of the day. His brilliant charge, bringing about such important results, was highly spoken of by all. McClellan, in his telegraphic report that evening said:

"General Hancock has taken two redoubts and repulsed Early's rebel brigade by a real charge with the bayonet, taking one Colonel and one hundred and fifty other prisoners, and killing at least two Colonels and many privates. His conduct was brilliant in the extreme."

McClellan resumed the march on Richmond, but slowly. A sudden push would no doubt have given him the rebel capital, where the defensive force was but 50,000 men; but his constitutional timidity stood in his way. In justice to him it must be said that the roads were almost impassable for artillery and wagon trains. On the 20th of May he reached the Chickahominy. Immediately he threw two divisions across that stream and stretched his army out over twenty miles of country. The river was not fordable, and there was but a single bridge across it. The corps of Keyes and Heintzelman were moved up to Fair Oaks or Seven Pines, only four miles from Richmond, where, on the 30th of June, under cover of a tremendous thunder-storm, the enemy fell upon them with nearly his whole force. The fight lasted two days. At the close of the first day, the Union troops, largely out-

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numbered, had been forced back full two miles. Next day Sumner and Hooker reached the field, and the rebels were disastrously repulsed. The last fighting was done by the division of the gallant Richardson, of Illinois, which was that afterward commanded by Hancock—the First Division of the Second Corps. Hurling back the last desperate assault of the enemy, and fairly crushing his columns, Richardson was pushing on into Richmond, when orders recalled him. Hancock was not actively engaged in this battle

McClellan still lay with his army on both sides of the Chickahominy. About the 20th of June he began to move to the right bank. By the 24th his army was across, except Porter's command of about 30,000; and he announced his purpose to move at once on Richmond. Stonewall Jackson, meantime, had joined Lee; and the latter, simultaneously with McClellan's movements, had crossed from the right to the left bank of the Chickahominy, some miles higher up, with the intention of destroying the Union forces before aid could reach them. It was the scheme of Fair Oaks over again. Then the weak left was assailed; now the left had been strengthened and the right weakened; and there Lee proposed to strike a terrible blow. On the 26th A. P. Hill attacked two Union brigades of McCall's division, strongly posted in advance of Porter's corps, but met a bloody repulse. The Union position here was untenable, and the forces were withdrawn during the night. Next day, with about

65,000 troops, including the corps of Longstreet, A. P. Hill, D. H. Hill, and Jackson, Lee fell upon Porter. The battle is known as that of Gaine's Mill or Cold Harbor. Porter was outnumbered two to one; but he was strongly posted and his men fought well. He was pressed at every point, and he had not a man in reserve. From two o'clock till four he held his ground with magnificent courage, hurling back charge after charge, but growing less able at every onset. At four o'clock Slocum came to his relief. He sent the reinforcements regiment by regiment to the weakest points, and so held on to his position with a death grip for two hours more. Except a single brigade the whole rebel force was in action, and fighting desperately. It was half-past six, and Porter's only hope was to hold on till dark. Suddenly a great shudder passed along his line, and, as if moved by a common impulse, his whole corps rolled back from the deadly shock. All seemed lost. At that critical moment French and Meagher appeared upon the scene with the Second and Third brigades of Richardson's division. Inspired with new courage, Porter's men faced about at once, dashed upon their enemy and fairly drove him from the field.

McClellan believed that there was a very strong force between him and Richmond, whereas there was only Magruder's division, about 18,000 strong. This division kept up a great show of assailing McClellan at different points, which the nature of the country enabled it to do with comparative impunity, and entire success in keeping

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60,000 men on that side of the Chickahominy, while the main rebel army was pounding the life out of Porter. And so the Union commander did not dare weaken his left, lest while Lee cut him off from his base of supplies at Yorktown, Magruder should cut his line of retreat to the James. Directly across the Chickahominy from Porter's bloody field lay Smith's division, with Hancock's brigade on its left. During the night of the 27th Porter's men were withdrawn and marched past Smith's rear toward the left of McClellan's line, destroying the bridge across the Chickahominy. In the morning Smith began to fall back. McClellan had resolved to change his base to the James River, and the corps of Sumner and Heintzelman were ordered to guard the rear. As Smith was falling back, Toombs's rebel brigade made a dash at Hancock. The assailants were flung back with frightful loss. Among the prisoners were Col. L. Q. C. Lamar and his Lieutenant-Colonel.

McClellan left Sumner and Heintzelman at Savage Station to guard his rear, while his other corps pushed on toward the James. Hancock's brigade was with the rear guard, but, through some misconception of his orders, Heintzelman fell back. When the enemy attacked, as he did repeatedly and savagely, the brunt of the fight fell upon Hancock, Burns, and Brooke, magnificently sustained by Pettit's, Hazzard's, Osborne's and Bramhall's batteries. Our men had been continuously on duty since the 26th; but every desperate assault was rolled back with calm de-

termination, and when night fell no rebel soldier had set his foot within the Union lines. When darkness put an end to the carnage Sumner ordered a retreat, leaving 2,500 wounded to fall into the enemy's hands. This battle is known as that of Savage Station, and was fought on the 29th of June.

Lee had crossed the Chickahominy on the 29th with his whole force ; made a forced march parallel to the line of retreat and, on the 30th, fell upon McCall, Kearny and Hooker, at Frazer's Farm. Jeff Davis had come down to see the fray, and Lee, having ordered up every man under his command, even calling in Wise's troops from Fort Darling, had no doubt that he would pierce the Union center, and capture the whole rear division. At first he gained some success, driving in McCall ; but Fighting Joe Hooker came up, the fiery Kearny came up, and the whole rebel line was rolled back in ragged rout, and was fain to seek a retreat in the thick woods, beneath the friendly shelter of the night. Hancock was still in the rear guard, and on this another desperate assault was made at Glendale, by Stonewall Jackson. But yet again the enemy's assaults were firmly and steadily repulsed. When darkness set in the wearied troops, who had now been fighting all day and marching all night for five consecutive days, once more took the route for the new base on James river. Next day the Union army took position at Malvern Hill ; and here Lee, on the first of July, dashed once more upon its lines, only to be hurled back

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which Hancock was stationed was not attacked. After
once more beating off his persistent foe, McClellan re-
treated still again to Harrison's Landing, and, with a lit-
tle more deliberation, Lee retreated to Richmond, each
devoutly returning thanks to Almighty God for having
vouchsafed him a noble victory.

CHAPTER III.

McClellan was ordered back to Washington, and the greater part of his command was transferred to Pope. The second battle of Bull Run followed, in which Hancock did not take part. Pope was beaten, and McClellan once more took command of the army. Lee crossed the Potomac into Maryland, leaving a force to invest Harper's Ferry, which was surrendered through cowardice or treachery. Franklin, in whose corps Hancock's brigade was placed, was sent to relieve that important post; but was too late. Franklin found his road across the Catoctin Mountains barred at Crampton's Gap by Howell Cobb, who was ordered to hold his ground at all hazards. Franklin brushed him away, however, with the loss of a few hundred men, and, being too late to relieve Harper's Ferry, hastened on to the neighborhood of Sharpsville, where, McClellan having forced the passage of South Mountain at Fisher's Gap, the two armies stood glaring at each other across Antietam Creek.

The passage of the Antietam could not be forced in the face of the enemy; and on the 16th, Hooker was sent up the river about two miles, where he crossed unopposed, and, turning southward, struck the enemy's left, gaining some advantage, and desisting only as darkness

fell. In the morning Hooker again attacked with great fury, his corps still being the only one west of the stream. Burnside was ordered to force a passage on McClellan's left, but he considered himself unable to do so, and made no very serious attempt. Lee was therefore at liberty to oppose nearly his whole force to Hooker, and the latter was quickly worsted, he himself being badly wounded. Mansfield was sent to his aid, but his corps was pitted alone against the whole rebel left; and, when it was forced back and Mansfield was killed, Sumner came upon the scene. He struck the enemy a little to the left of the previous fighting; but he, too, was left unsupported, and, though his troops at first gained ground, he was at length forced to retire, though his First Division, under Richardson, held its position in the corn-field. Just as Sumner's attack was seen to have failed, Franklin arrived on the ground. Smith's division, including Hancock's brigade, was ordered to carry the ground so long and so hotly contested. The men advanced at double-quick, carried the position at a dash, cleared the woods and the corn-field of their defenders in ten minutes, and held their ground there without serious molestation. Their loss was not great: Porter and Burnside had as yet done nothing. Sumner, Mansfield and Hooker had been beaten in detail, though the enemy was content with holding his position, when, late in the day, Franklin came to the relief of the right, and Burnside at length made the long-delayed

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Washington, and the transferred to Pope. owed, in which Hancock's brigade important post; but across the Catoctin Gap by Howell Cobb, at all hazards. Franklin the loss of a few to relieve Harper's neighborhood of Sharpsville, the passage of South armies stood glaring

could not be forced in the 16th, Hooker was where he crossed un- truck the enemy's left, ing only as darkness

attempt to force the lower bridge. He made good his crossing, but his further advance was checked, and the enemy was once more concentrating to crush him, when Sumner again struck his center. The First Division of his corps, led by Richardson, amid a perfect storm of canister and musketry advanced once more from the cornfield, and again forced back the enemy; but Richardson fell in the struggle. In the middle of the fight, Hancock was sent to the command of the division, and from this time till the Summer of 1863, the history of Hancock is that of the First Division of the Second Army Corps. The fighting at Antietam was nearly over when Hancock assumed his new command. Our army, fighting a single corps and sometimes a single division at a time, had been outnumbered at every point of contact and repulsed in many places; yet the enemy had suffered about as heavily as the Union army; and McClellan had all his troops across the Antietam, except the reserve corps of Fitz John Porter. The next day, the 18th, was passed in inactivity. During the ensuing night Lee retreated.

Some harassing but not important operations followed, including a reconnoissance to Martinsburg, led by Hancock. On the 7th of November, McClellan was retired from the command of the Army of the Potomac, and was succeeded by Burnside, whose diffidence in himself and doubts of his ability to command so great an army, were justified by events. On the 29th of Novem-

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ber, Hancock was promoted to be major-general of vol-
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In December the Union army was concentrated at
Fredericksburg, and Burnside determined to cross the
Rappahannock at that place and move toward Richmond.
A force was detailed from Hancock's division to guard
the pontoniers in laying bridges, but the fire of the rebel
sharpshooters was so destructive that the attempt was
abandoned. Volunteers were then called for, who leaped
into the pontoons, pushed across under a sharp fire, and
drove the enemy from his rifle-pits on the south side of
the river. As the boats were pushing off, Robert Hen-
dershot, a drummer-boy attached to the Seventh Michi-
gan regiment, leaped into the water, seized the boat and
made good the crossing. His bravery earned him the
sobriquet of the Drummer Boy of the Rappahannock.

During the 12th the army crossed by several bridges,
which were now constructed without opposition. Burn-
side's plan was to engage the enemy warmly in front,
which Sumner was ordered to do, while Franklin, com-
manding the left, which had been greatly strengthened,
was to gain Lee's right, turn his flank, and render his
position untenable. Franklin appears not to have un-
derstood his orders as Burnside intended them to be un-
derstood, and, instead of delivering a strong and deter-
mined assault he weakly engaged two of his nine divis-
ions, and when these were, as a matter of course, driven
back by superior numbers, he desisted from further effort.

On the right a different state of things existed. The enemy here were posted on a hill known as Marge's Heights. Its summit was covered with batteries; its sides were seamed with rifle-pits, and at its foot ran a sunken road sustained by stone walls. The front was so narrow that the attacking force was formed in column by brigades. Between the rebel position and the sheltering streets of the town was an open common a quarter of a mile in width, intersected by a mill-race, and across this Sumner's men rushed to an impossible task. French took the lead; but his column melted away under a murderous fire. Then came Hancock. As his men broke from their cover, a storm of deadly hail broke upon their ranks. The whole atmosphere was alive with invisible but busy messengers of death. The summit of the hill was clothed with the sulphurous breath of eighty guns, and three lines of volleying musketry showed where the long ranks of rebel soldiery, themselves protected, were pouring murderous volleys into the advancing lines. The ground was heavy with red Virginia mud, and through this the devoted division pushed its way, like some strong bird breasting the tempest and defying the very lightnings of heaven. At every step dozens of men fell dead. At every moment great gaps were torn in the ragged line by the relentless storm of lead and iron. Flags fell as their bearers fell; were seized by new hands, rose and struggled on. The foot of the hill was reached; but, great God! how few lived to reach it! A gallant division

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started on the faithful errand; a mere handful dashed itself in heroic devotion and impotent valor against the solid stone wall, beyond which no man, through all that fatal day, was able to go. Zook launched his command forward like a catapult. Meagher's green-and-gold trappings gleamed at the head of the Irish brigade like a battle flag. Hancock was everywhere, directing, encouraging, commanding. But all was of no avail; for two mortal hours the unequal strife lasted, and the gallant band rolled back, almost annihilated. Some regiments left eighty per cent. of their men on the field. Other troops were in turn devoted to slaughter in spite of Sumner's piteous prayers to have them spared from so impossible a task; but Burnside was firm; and when night fell, ten thousand dead and wounded men lay upon a little patch of ground not a quarter of a mile in extent. The frightful carnage may be gathered from the fact that few more than 30,000 men were under fire in the whole battle, and the losses were nearly 15,000. Franklin's men did not suffer at all in proportion to the others, so that the mortality in the divisions of Hancock and French was simply appalling. After reporting the losses given above, the Medical Inspector General added: "The return of killed may be too small." Many of the soldiers engaged believed that the casualties had been purposely reduced to hide from the army and the country the extent of the sacrifice.

After Fredericksburg the troops returned to their can-

tonments north of the Rappahannock, and Hancock devoted himself to the care of his division. He made frequent inspections, ordered thorough drills, adopted measures to secure the full supplies of rations and clothing to which his men were entitled, and in every way labored to restore their *morale*. The soldiers soon recovered from the depression caused by defeat; and when the movement toward Chancellorville began, there was not a finer body of men in the army, nor one more ready to meet the enemy than the First Division of the Second Corps.

A circumstance showing the conditions under which our men were sometimes called upon to fight, may be here related. A regiment which had just joined Hancock's division, was armed with Belgian rifles. These were contract weapons, made of miserable material, not finished at all; the bayonets were of soft iron, and many of the muskets had springs so weak that they would not explode a percussion cap. General Zook inspected the regiment. After reviewing the men his attention was called to their arms. He took a musket from a soldier, thrust the bayonet into the ground and bent it to an angle of ninety degrees. Then he put a cap upon the nipple and pulled the trigger half a dozen times, but the cap failed to explode. "There is one thing satisfactory about these arms," said the General. "What is that?" asked the Colonel of the regiment. "I am thoroughly satisfied they're not worth a damn!" returned Zook. Report was

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made to Hancock, but he had no power in the matter.
"Tell the men," he said, "to look around them as soon
as they get into a fight. They'll find plenty of guns on
the field." Two days later the regiment was put into
the vortex of fire under Marge's Heights; but death was
too busy among its members just then to leave them any
time to look around for new guns. They left half their
number on the field, and probably did not kill a man on
the other side.

CHAPTER IV.

The army took the route for Chancellorville on the 28th of April, 1863. Hooker's plan was very simple. Leaving Sedgwick at Falmouth to stand guard between Lee and Washington, he took the Second, Third, Fifth and Eleventh Corps up the Rappahannock, found an undefended crossing and soon had the bodies mentioned on the south side of that stream. The First Corps and part of the Twelfth afterward joined him there, leaving with Sedgwick about 25,000 men.

An incident of the advance toward Chancellorville is worth giving. The march was begun at four o'clock in the morning, but Gen. Hancock was detained, receiving orders from Gen. Couch, the commandant of the corps. Riding toward the head of his division, as he reached the Irish Brigade he suddenly reined in his horse, leaped to the ground, leaned against a tree and threw up his breakfast. The brigade had halted for a rest, and Hancock, turning toward the men, remarked quietly, "Boys, this getting up so early is very unhealthy." "Ah, thin, Gineral dear," said a member of the Sixty-ninth New York, "won't you have the laste sup in the world to take the taste out av yer mouth? It's right good shtuff—it's good enough for a gineral." In the meantime Hancock had taken a drink, and was handing back the canteen to its

owner. "Too good, too good," he said; "it's good enough for a private in the Sixty-ninth." The next moment he was galloping on as though nausea was unknown to him.

Hancock's command crossed the river on the 1st of May, and reached the battle-field about midnight. In the morning it was engaged in feeling for the enemy along the left of Hooker's line; duty of great difficulty. His men reported from time to time that large bodies of rebels were moving toward the right, but no adequate measures were taken to meet the evident effort to overwhelm our right. Near evening a sudden and tremendous onset of Stonewall Jackson's whole corps swept back our Eleventh corps, under Howard, and compelled the reconstruction of our line. The fugitives retired in the greatest disorder. The disaster left Hancock exposed in front and rear, and for a time he actually fought his division in both directions. Fortunately the rebels did not press their attack. If they had the gallant division would have found itself in a very perilous predicament. In the midst of the fighting, Hancock had his horse shot under him; he leaped to the ground, threw his arms around the neck of the noble animal to bid him farewell, and then sent an aide to put him out of misery.

Historians whose descriptions of battles are wholly imaginary frequently have thrilling stories of the horrible screams of wounded horses on the field. The writer does not deny that horses ever scream, since to do so would be

to claim that he had observed the conduct of all wounded steeds whatever ; but he has seen a great many horses hit on the field, and has yet to hear one express itself in this way. In the case referred to, General Hancock's horse had his leg almost knocked off by a shell, so that it hung dangling by the skin, yet, so soon as it was left by its rider, it began cropping the grass.

On Sunday morning, May 3, Jackson's corps, now led by Stuart (Jackson having received his death wound), attacked Sickles with desperate fury, and forced him back somewhat, though thirty thousand men lay close at hand in entire inaction. Our line was then re-formed. In the mean time Sedgwick had carried the heights at Fredericksburg, and was driving Ewell back on Lee's position. The latter detached the main part of his force to the aid of Ewell, who in turn drove Sedgwick back across the Rappahannock. While this fight was going on Hooker's force of sixty thousand men lay silent as the grave and never fired a musket to effect a diversion in favor of their comrades a few miles distant. On Wednesday morning Hooker recrossed the river.

Shortly afterward, Couch withdrawing, Hancock was promoted to the command of the gallant Second Corps, and from that day till the close of the war the history of Hancock is the history of the corps ; its fortunes were his ; its glory encircles his brow ; and where the trefoil battle flag gleamed like a meteor through the smoke of battle, there be sure was Hancock leading the charge.

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Soon after the battle of Chancellorsville, Lee resolved on an invasion of the North. To this end he called to his standard every available man, and started on his errand with the finest army the Confederacy ever organized. It numbered fully 100,000; it was well drilled, ably led, and a series of successes had given its men a conviction that it was well nigh invincible. Moving up the Rapidan, Lee reached the valley of the Shenandoah, down which he marched leisurely. Hooker followed with equal deliberation, keeping between the rebel army and Washington. Hancock guarded the rear, he himself being among the last to leave the lines on the Rappahannock. Moving rapidly thence to the neighborhood of Alexandria, he marched in a single day across the Bull Run battle field, to Thoroughfare Gap in the Bull Run Mountains, which he was ordered to guard, in order that a strong rebel force, supposed to be moving up the Luray Valley, might not break through. He retained only the First Division, his Second and Third being posted at other menaced points. Early in the morning picket firing announced the presence of the enemy, and it was soon discovered that a hostile division of 10,000 or 12,000 strong, instead of being on the other side of the mountains, was rapidly stealing around to capture Hancock's force, which, perhaps, comprised 2,000 men. In this emergency a weak man would have given up everything; a rash man would have dashed himself upon the enemy, with equally disastrous results. Hancock did neither; he comprehended

the situation at a glance, swung his command round, "left in front," so as to cover his train and his cattle, presenting a solid line of such force as he had, unlimbered a battery, which began shelling the woods, and moved quickly northward. Order seemed to come out of chaos as if by magic; in a very few minutes his command had slipped from the rebel grasp, and he lost twelve men in the skirmish which ensued, in a position where it seemed, a quarter of an hour before, that his whole division was inevitably doomed to capture. Sometimes better generalship is required to avoid an unequal fight than to win a battle.

CHAPTER V.

On the 27th of June, Hooker resigned the command of the army, and Meade became its leader. Both armies were then north of the Potomac. The rebel line was farther west than the Union army, reaching to Chambersburg and Carlisle, in Pennsylvania, while Meade's army was in the neighborhood of Frederick, Maryland. Following out the plan of campaign sketched by his predecessor, Meade resolved to concentrate his army on Pipe Creek, near Uniontown, and there offer battle. But Reynolds's corps, which took part at Gettysburg, was struck on the first of July by the rebels streaming back from the north, driven out of the town with considerable loss, and its leader killed. Hancock was twenty miles distant. When he heard the heavy boom of the guns, his quick ear told him that no mere skirmish was in progress. Putting spurs to his horse he galloped toward the field, leaving orders that his command should follow with all possible speed. Meade, who was at Taneytown, Maryland, sent orders to Hancock to examine the field and to decide whether it would be better that the troops at Gettysburg should fall back to the position originally selected, or that the other corps should hasten to their

assistance and decide the battle on the spot. Reaching the scene of conflict about three o'clock, Hancock found the First and Eleventh corps largely outnumbered, badly beaten, and falling back in confusion. Howard had succeeded to the command when Reynolds fell, and was impotent to stay the flight of his men. Hancock's presence acted like magic upon the fugitives. Stopping the tide of retreat, he reorganized the broken brigades; formed a line along Cemetery Hill; took in at one all-searching glance the capabilities of the ground; and sent instant word to Meade that Gettysburg was the one spot of all spots in the world to fight out the crisis of the war, and to determine whether "government of the people, for the people, and by the people," should or should not perish from the earth.

Before morning the whole army except the Sixth Corps was on the grounds. Hancock placed the troops as they came up, and when daylight of the 2d of July broke, Lee was confronted by 70,000 veterans. The Twelfth Corps occupied the right at Culp's Hill, a steep wooded elevation. Then followed the Eleventh, First, Second and Fifth Corps. Sickles with the Third Corps, who should have occupied the space between the Second and Fifth, moved his command forward nearly a mile from the position assigned him, to the elevation known as Seminary or Oak Ridge, where his left was completely in air, leaving a wide gap between himself and the Fifth Corps. Blunders of this character seldom escaped the vigilant eyes of

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the rebels; and before Sickles could be retired to the line of Cemetery Ridge, the enemy was upon him. McLaws struck his left with great impetuosity, while Hood poured into the gap to get a position in his rear. Sickles himself never lacked courage, and both he and his men did all that could be done in the emergency, but, taken at every disadvantage, his left doubled up and melted away before the impetuous assault of Longstreet's veterans. At the very crisis of the struggle Sickles had his leg almost torn to pieces and he was borne from the field. In this emergency Hancock was the first to perceive that something must be done at once, or the disaster would be serious. But alas! his means were limited. He could spare from his own line only a single division, the First, scarce 2,000 strong; but, without a moment's hesitation, he flung that gallant handful into the vortex to stay the rushing sweep of five times their number. There was no time to change front; but, swinging into line, "left in front," the command filed down a cross road leading toward Sherfy's peach orchard, paused among the boulders for a minute to catch breath, and then, silent as the grave, dashed into the open and fell upon the foe. For a moment the work was deadly and then the whole rebel line rolled back. Through a wheat field the gallant First followed the retiring enemy till the summit of Oak Ridge was reached, and across this the conflicting forces swayed and surged in the horrible embrace of mutual destruction. But the rebel division filled the whole line, while Hancock's brigades were a

quarter of a mile apart. They had no line—only groups of combatants.

Suddenly an officer ran down from our right, announcing that the enemy was once more flanking a division into the unfilled gap. Reluctantly the command to retire was given. The brigades filed off and marched from the field as if on parade. The rebels rose with a yell to pursue, but paused aghast, for as Hancock's men drew off, a dark blue line was seen winding across from under the shelter of Little Round Top, and our gallant boys cheered once more as they caught glimpses of the stars and stripes gleaming through the smoke of war, and by its side the battle-flag of the glorious Sixth Corps. When the fight of the first opened, Sedgwick was thirty-five miles away; but, hastily taking the road, he never paused till he placed his command on the field, just in season to thwart for the second time Hood's effort to step into the gap which Sickles's mistake had opened. The struggle of this day was desperate and bloody. Zook, commanding the Third Brigade, was killed. Col. Cross, commanding the First Brigade, was killed, and the Colonel who succeeded him shared his fate. Full half the men who marched into that blood-stained wheat-field were killed or wounded. Among the most deeply lamented of those who fell was Lieutenant-Colonel Merwin, commanding the Twenty-seventh Connecticut.

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resist Longstreet's advance. In its absence Ewell as-
saulted that strong position and gained a foothold there,
so that the night of the second of July found the enemy
in occupation of ground he had wrested from us on both
our flanks. With the dawn of day Geary dashed back
into his own line again, drove out Ewell after a fierce
struggle, and restored the position on Culp's Hill. On
other parts of the field all was silent. About noon, how-
ever, the crest of Seminary Ridge, opposite Hancock, be-
gan to bristle with guns. Suddenly, with one tremendous
roar, the dogs of war opened their iron throats, and all
the air was filled with a roar of artillery such as the west-
ern world has never witnessed before or since. Within a
space of half a mile a hundred and twenty guns launched
their iron hail, and mostly upon Hancock's corps. Gen-
eral Hunt replied as best he could; but the ground on
our side was broken by rocks and trees, and he could
place but eighty guns to reply to the rebel line. The con-
test was unequal, and, after a tremendous duel of an hour,
our overmatched artillerists drew back from the contest.
For another hour the rebel guns made play, our infantry
holding to their position with a tenacity that not even
that dreadful *feu d'enfer* could shake. Then the clamor
ceased, and from beneath the dense sulphurous masses
that clothed Seminary Ridge the rebel hosts once more
moved to the charge. This was the pick and flower of
Southern chivalry. Pettigrew was there, Pickett was
there, Wilcox was there, Heth was there, Pender was in

reserve, and Lee in person directed the movement and watched its result. The theater of this awful tragedy is an open valley having a rivulet running through its center. From this tiny streamlet the meadow slopes gently up to Seminary Ridge on the west and Cemetery Ridge on the east. From Sherfy's peach orchard to Hancock's left was nearly a mile; but on our right the lines approached more nearly. As the long rebel corps opened out to view Hancock saw that the decisive hour had come. He hastily sent an aide to the Chief of Artillery. "Tell Major-General Hunt," said he, "to give me two batteries, and more if he can spare them." In a minute or two a couple of batteries of 24-inch rifled guns came galloping up. "Why do you bring those guns?" shouted Hancock in wrath. "I don't want those pop-guns! Tell General Hunt to give me some Napoleon guns. Stop! I'll see General Hunt myself." Soon the bright chunky bronze guns came wheeling down, unlimbered and prepared to open upon the enemy. The Napoleon gun is a brass 12-pounder, throwing round shot, canister or shrapnel. It sometimes throws grape; but I believe no grape was used at Gettysburg.

Meanwhile "the long line came gleaming on" down the opposite slope. It was a gallant array. No coward hearts beat beneath those tattered battle-flags. These were the men who had contested every inch of ground from Fair Oaks to Chancellorsville; and, at "right shoulder shift" they stepped forward as if on parade. But now

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the brazen bull-dogs began to bark. The range was eight hundred yards, and the Napoleon guns were loaded with canister. As each piece spoke there was a hurtling, rushing sound like an awful whisper of death shuddering down a storm-blast, and then a bloody chasm would open in the advancing line. Again and again and again the guns belched out their deadly message; and again and yet again the stern warriors closed their ranks and moved onward to the charge. Dead and dying are left at every step—bloody drops of agony wrung from the giant division at every fatal footfall; but still those heroic men press on. They reach within three hundred yards of Hancock's line, when suddenly that terrible Second Corps rises to its feet and pours in a volley that smites down the battalions of Pettigrew and Pickett as if God's avenging angel had breathed upon them. Whole brigades withered and shrunk into annihilation before that terrible storm of death. Many threw up their hands, came into our lines and sought the rear as prisoners. Farther to the right, however, the attacking column actually pushed on till it struck our line and charged with the bayonet. There was a horrible moment of active death that makes the soul sick with horror to contemplate; and then the remnants of that gallant eighteen thousand rolled back, blaspheming, bleeding, despairing, dying, and the crisis of the war was past. Lee had wasted twelve thousand veterans, and had lost the flower of his army. Five thousand prisoners and thirty three colors were taken in front of Hancock's line.

Fredericksburg was avenged !

In the very moment of victory Hancock was wounded. A shell from the enemy had struck a fence and sent the splinters flying. A big rusty nail struck Hancock in the thigh and penetrated to the bone, splintering it, and making an ugly flesh wound. He pulled the nail from his leg and remarked : " They must be hard up for ammunition when they throw such shot as that ! " He refused to leave the field till it was evident the attack would not be renewed.

Hancock dispatched an aide to Gen. Meade, saying : " Tell Gen. Meade that the troops under my command have repulsed the enemy, who are now flying in all directions in my front." Meade replied : " Say to Gen. Hancock I regret exceedingly that he is wounded, and that I thank him, for the country and myself, for the service he has rendered to-day."

On each of the three days of this greatest of American conflicts, Hancock had been the savior of the army. On the first he had stayed the retreat of our troops, brought order out of confusion, selected the line of operations, decided upon the place to fight, and assigned to the troops their positions. On the second, Meade had asked him to take command on the left, where he had repaired Sickles's disaster, stopped Hood's career, and preserved our line. On the third, he had repelled the last desperate assault with a carnage that broke the spirit of the enemy and practically ended the battle.

Meade thanked him on the field of battle; the Congress of the United States returned him the thanks of the country, and the people ratified the resolution.

His wound was found to be severe, and he went to his parents' home at Norristown to recover. So soon as he was able to walk with a crutch, he paid a hasty visit to West Point, and thence retired to his own home at Longwood, near St. Louis. It was Winter before he rejoined his command; and, even then, his wound continued to give him much trouble. The thigh-bone had been more or less shattered, and from time to time pieces would work out and reopen the wound. In the Winter he was ordered North on special recruiting duty, the intention being that his corps should be strengthened up to 50,000. In carrying out this object he went from city to city, and was everywhere received with unbounded honor. In Philadelphia he received a most graceful compliment, being tendered a public reception in Independence Hall. Following is a copy of the resolution passed on that occasion by the City Council:

SELECT AND COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA.

WELCOME TO MAJOR GENERAL WINFIELD SCOTT HANCOCK.

Resolved, by the Select and Common Council of the City of Philadelphia, That the thanks of the citizens of Philadelphia are eminently due and are hereby tendered to

Major General Hancock,

for his brilliant services in the cause of the Union, during the present

unnholy rebellion against the authority of the government and people of the United States.

Resolved, That the use of Independence Hall be granted to Major General Hancock, for the reception of his friends, and in order to afford the citizens of Philadelphia an opportunity to testify their personal regard for him, and their appreciation of his gallantry and patriotism.

Resolved, That the Mayor of Philadelphia and the President of Councils be requested to carry the resolution into effect, and that the Clerks of Councils be requested to furnish a copy of the same to General Hancock.

The ovation was one of the most gratifying ever accorded an American citizen. On the very spot made sacred by our revolutionary history; in the very hall where the Declaration of Independence was signed; at the very desk on which it was signed; beside the very chair in which John Hancock sat when he signed it, and in which George Washington sat when he presided over the first Congress of the United States; beneath the great bell which "proclaimed liberty throughout the land to all the inhabitants thereof"; surrounded by relics of the days that tried men's souls—Winfield Scott Hancock was congratulated by his fellow citizens for his heroism in defending that Union which John Hancock had done so much to create.

From Philadelphia Hancock's duties took him to New York. Here another magnificent reception was tendered him in the Governor's room at the City Hall. At Albany the Legislature paid him honor; and in Boston the General Court invited him to a seat on the floor of the House. At a later date a magnificently-mounted sword was voted

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to him at the Mississippi Sanitary Fair; and at the Cen-
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set of horse equipments was voted him as the most popu-
lar soldier of the war.

CHAPTER VI.

Before Spring he resumed his command. Grant had come east to assume personal direction of the Army of the Potomac, which was divided into three grand divisions, the right of which, the Second Corps, was placed under the command of Hancock; the center, the Fifth Corps, was under Sedgwick. Burnside, with the Ninth Corps, was added to the army after crossing the Rapidan, and this swelled the total force under Grant's command to more than a hundred thousand. The opposing army, under Lee, probably numbered about seventy-five thousand.

On the 4th of May Grant crossed the Rapidan, and entered upon one of the most protracted, desperate and bloody struggles recorded in history. On reaching the south bank of the Rapidan, the army entered the desolate wooded region known as the Wilderness, a few miles west of the Chancellorville battlefield. Grant's design was to cross this region, then mass against Lee, crush him in battle if possible, if not, turn his right and cut him off from his base of supplies. Lee would then have the option of fighting to regain his communications with Richmond, or of making a sudden and determined dash on Washington. In the former case Grant would intrench, and would of course laugh at all attempts on Lee's part

to break his lines; in the latter case, the strong defences of the capital would be able to hold the enemy at bay till Grant, following on Lee's heels, could catch him in a trap and capture him.

Lee, however, had other views. He proposed to plant himself squarely in Grant's road to Richmond, intrench and await his enemy's assaults under cover, and to strike at every exposed flank during a movement toward the South. Grant had the advantage in numbers, but Lee had position and perfect familiarity with the ground in his favor. And, to begin with, he did not propose to let Grant march through the Wilderness unopposed. Ewell was near the Wilderness, resting on the river. Hastily summoning his other corps, under Hill and Longstreet, Lee placed himself on Grant's flank, waited till Hancock had passed him ten miles, and then, on the 5th, threw Hill with great fury on Warren. Sedgwick was soon after attacked by Ewell. Grant at first supposed these were demonstrations to retard his march; but so soon as he became convinced that he was assailed in earnest, he recalled Hancock and sent word to Burnside, still north of the Rapidan, to hurry to his aid. Hancock retraced his steps with all possible speed, but was none too soon to relieve Warren from the pressure of Hill's attack. During the night of the 5th, Longstreet came upon the scene. Hancock divined that Longstreet would detach part of his corps for a flanking movement; accordingly he posted half of his own corps to resist this

attempt, and at 5 o'clock in the morning, attacked in front with the other half. This movement was brilliantly successful, the enemy being driven back about two miles. As the other corps had not advanced, Hancock considered a further advance dangerous, and rested here. Lee then recalled Longstreet's flanking division, and massing the whole of Longstreet's and Hill's corps, made the most desperate assaults on the Second Corps. The fighting ranks among the most determined and deadly of the whole war. The ground was thickly wooded; artillery could not be used at all; and the contending forces could not see each other until they were at close quarters. In the afternoon Stevenson's division of Burnside's corps was driven back and Hancock's right was threatened. The latter sent Carroll's brigade to encounter this new enemy, which, taking the rebels in flank, routed them with great slaughter. Up to four o'clock our men held their lines against the most determined assaults; but now a new foe assailed them, against which they were powerless to contend. The dry leaves lying thick beneath the trees had caught fire, and the wind blowing toward Hancock's position, his whole line of wooden breastworks was soon in a blaze. The position was dreadful, for those of our wounded who were unable to crawl off were literally roasted alive. Our line retired; and, the flames passing on as soon as the lighter material was consumed, the rebels, with a yell, rushed into the work and occupied it. They had scarce done so, how-

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ever, before Hancock charged them again, drove them
 out with loss, and regained the position. This ended the
 fighting on Hancock's front. At a later hour, Ewell sud-
 denly swooped down on Sedgwick, captured the greater
 part of two brigades, and got safe off with his prize. On
 the morning of the 7th, Lee was found to have drawn off
 and intrenched himself in a position which Grant did not
 deem it prudent to assail. Our losses were 20,000, includ-
 ing 6,000 prisoners. Hancock was slightly wounded
 during the battle of the 6th.

On the evening of the 7th, Grant again turned his face
 toward Richmond. But he had to move with great cau-
 tion, guarding well his flanks against his vigilant foe, who
 was ever on the watch to take advantage of the slightest
 error. This gave Lee plenty of time to again post him-
 self across Grant's line of march; and when the latter
 reached Spottsylvania Court House, he found himself
 once more in front of a strong natural position, made
 doubly strong by art, and manned by the whole rebel
 army.

It must be borne in mind that during this whole series
 of maneuvers and battles, from the Wilderness to Cold
 Harbor, the enemy did not fall back *before* Grant; the
 armies marched side by side. When they came in con-
 tact they fought; when they got tired fighting they turned
 southward again; but Lee always had the shorter line,
 and was always able to secure a position threatening
 Grant. Grant did not appear able even to gain a position

threatening Lee. Again, when Grant made a mistake Lee was always ready to pounce upon and punish him; while we are forced to conclude either that Lee never made any mistakes, or that if he did, Grant was never ready to take advantage of them. When Lee struck our troops they were always on the march or in the open; when we attacked the rebels, they were always in a strong position, well fortified. Why Lee was always able to march on the shorter line, while Grant was always compelled to make detours; why Grant was always compelled to lose time in guarding his flanks from assault, while Lee was always able to move with celerity and lose no time in guarding against Grant—these are matters the military critics must settle.

Lee's position was on a ridge, his center touching the River Po, but both of his wings refused, his whole line forming a crescent. On the 9th there was some skirmishing, during which General Sedgwick was killed. On the 10th Hancock moved upon the enemy's right, forced the passage of the river and gained some advantages. But Grant had determined to make his grand attack on Lee's center, and ordered Hancock back. As soon as the latter began to retire he was of course attacked, and the fighting was obstinate. To add to its horrors, the woods again took fire, and many of the wounded were burned to death. The losses here were about equal; the rebel attack was beaten off, and Hancock re-crossed in safety. Two of his divisions were then withdrawn to reinforce

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Warren in his assault upon the enemy's center. Two charges were made and repulsed by the enemy, with a loss to our side of 5,000 men. The indomitable spirit of the Union leader displayed itself on this occasion, for it was on the evening of this bloody repulse that he sent a dispatch to Washington containing the famous sentence, "*I propose to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer.*" Some rain fell during the afternoon, and the night was dark, gloomy and foggy. If Grant was able to adhere more firmly to his set purpose after a disaster, Hancock was a man after his own heart. No sooner had night fallen than he moved his whole command to the left, once more re-crossed the river, and halted for a few hours of needed rest. The morning had not come when he was again in motion. Silently as death his lines moved through the dark woods, concealed by the heavy fogs. As soon as the enemy's pickets were seen, the whole corps dashed forward with a cheer, leaped over the rebel works and carried them with a bound. Four thousand prisoners and thirty guns were taken. Hancock hastily scribbled to Grant: "I have captured from thirty to forty guns," he said; "I have finished up Johnson and am going into Early." He found, however, that the enemy's second line was too strong to be assailed, and he was soon convinced that he need not go beyond the works he had already captured in search of fighting. Scarce had our own men reversed the rifle-pits to serve as a cover against rebel attacks, when strong and determined attempts were

made to re-take them. Lee was usually the most prudent of commanders, seldom risking an assault unless the object aimed at was fully equal to the risks attending its conquest. In the present case, however, he appeared to allow his feelings to run away with his discretion. The captured troops were irrecoverably gone; the guns had nearly all been removed; the works themselves were not essential to the integrity of his position; yet he appeared insanely bent on regaining them, no matter what the cost might be. He had been in the works, and was very near capture when Hancock so unceremoniously made his morning call. Indeed the Confederate leader is said to have departed toward the rear in a manner more expeditious than dignified. And he evidently formed a very firm determination that the Second Corps should not retain the position it had gained. Accordingly he collected every man that could be spared from the rest of his lines, and hurled two full corps at Hancock. The fight that ensued was among the most determined ever witnessed. Our men were well protected; and they poured the most murderous volleys into their antagonists as they charged. Line after line dashed up to the earthworks in the very madness of heroic resolve; but they were met by men no less brave than they. Again and again the desperate assault was made, but ever without success. Sometimes the troops in gray would actually reach the rifle-pits, and then the musketry ceased and the men fought over the low earthen parapet with the bayonet.

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But, in spite of their superhuman efforts, the rebel ranks were surely forced back from every vain endeavor, and always left their dead and wounded behind in thousands. All day long that Titanic contest went on. Cartridge-boxes went out of fashion, and Hancock's men fought with open ammunition boxes beside them. The frightful nature of the contest may be judged by the fact that everywhere within musket range of that fiery vortex the forest trees were killed; "and one tree eighteen inches in diameter was cut clean in two by the bullets." The day passed away and night came once more, but the awful conflict never paused. Five times the rebel hosts shrunk back from the terrible ordeal; but every time Lee reformed them and ordered them back to the fight. The forest was filled with the smoke of battle, dimly lighted up with the incessant flashes of the musketry. The troops, hungry, thirsty, worn with their tremendous efforts, seemed mad with the very mania of battle—their faces black with powder, their throats parched with thirst—crazed, insane, furious, they dashed upon each other like warring fiends, till pandemonium itself offered no parallel to the scene. At length human nature could endure no more; and at midnight Lee withdrew his whole army to a second line, stronger than the first, and relinquished to the victors their hard-won prize. It may well be imagined that, after twenty hours of such a desperate struggle, our men had no desire to pursue.

CHAPTER VII.

Some days were now devoted to strategy, Grant endeavoring to turn Lee's right flank, but without success. Lee, on the other hand, had had enough of fighting for the present, and stood on the defensive. Every where he threw up works in his front, and was quite willing to be attacked. On the 18th, Gibbon and Barlow made demonstrations against Lee's right, but made no impression. On the 19th, Ewell drove in Tyler's division of the Fifth Corps. Hancock sent assistance, and Ewell was driven off with considerable loss in killed and wounded and several hundred prisoners.

In two weeks after crossing the Rapidan, our army had lost forty thousand men.

On the night of the 20th, Grant withdrew from the front of Lee's position, and turned once more toward Richmond, Hancock in the advance; but on reaching the North Anna River, his indefatigable enemy was, as usual, found entrenched in a strong position, barring the road. While our troops were on the march, on the 21st, Hill attacked the Sixth Corps, now Wright's, but was easily beaten off. On the 23d, Griffin's division was assailed with like result; and on the same day Cutler, being assaulted, beat the rebels badly, and took a thousand

prisoners. About the same time Hancock advanced on the enemy's right, beat McLaws, took a work of some strength, and gained a strong position on the south bank of the river. But after a careful examination of the rebel position, Grant decided not to assault it, and on the 26th he again executed his favorite flank movement toward Richmond, leaving Hancock to guard his rear.

The Pamunkey River was crossed without serious opposition, and the army entered upon the scene of McClellan's campaign of 1862. Skirmishing and minor combats were frequent, with the advantage somewhat on our side. On the 2d of June, the armies confronted each other at Cold Harbor, almost on the scene of the battle with Porter, two years earlier; but this time the positions were reversed — Lee, largely outnumbered, intrenched himself and awaited Grant's attack. The latter had been reinforced by Smith's Eighteenth Corps.

On the morning of June 3, Grant ordered a general assault upon the enemy's lines, and this was made by the Second, Sixth and Eighteenth Corps. Burnside was ordered to assault at the same time, but he did not get up early enough. The Sixth and Eighteenth Corps charged without much spirit, and were driven back after suffering inconsiderable loss. Not so with the Second Corps. Barlow and Gibbons dashed furiously upon the enemy's works through a dreadful fire of artillery and musketry; and the former actually gained a foothold within the outer works; but here he found himself ex-

posed to a direct fire from a second line in his front and an enfilading fire on both flanks from the works he had entered. After losing heavily, he was forced out, and the whole Second Corps threw up works a few yards in front of the enemy's position. In half an hour's time 7,000 men had been killed and wounded. After the fighting was all over, Burnside announced that he had got into position on the enemy's flank and was ready to attack; but the assault in which he was expected to join had now failed, and Burnside was recalled. In the evening, the rebels made a feeble attempt to drive the Second Corps from the new rifle-pits it had thrown up, but they were beaten off with little loss on either side.

In all the operations around Cold Harbor, the losses to the Union army aggregated 13,000.

Our army remained in front of Cold Harbor more than a week, the lines in some places so close that a biscuit could be tossed from one to the other; but neither party felt like attacking the other. On the night of the 12th Hancock was withdrawn and marched nearly in McClellan's tracks to the James River, which he crossed and advanced on Petersburg. Grant, it seems, had decided to attack that place at once; but Hancock had received no intimation of his design. He was ordered to march to a given point on a map, but as that point had no existence off of the map Hancock failed to find it. Had he been told to march on Petersburg he would have done that without any map. As it was, valuable time was lost, and

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night fell before the troops could be got into posi-
tion for operations. Late on the 16th, Hancock and
Burnside assailed the enemy's position and carried some
of his works ; but by this time Lee had come upon the
scene, and his whole army was close at hand within inte-
rior and stronger lines, to which the works captured had
but served as a mask. An assault was made on the inte-
rior line, which was repulsed. In the operations since
crossing the James, Grant had lost 10,000 men. He now
sat down to the siege of Petersburg.

Almost from the beginning of the campaign the wound
he had received at Gettysburg gave Hancock great
trouble. From time to time pieces of bone worked to the
surface, and any exertion more severe than usual gave
him the most exquisite pain. The campaign so far had
been one of the most exacting of which the annals of war
have any record. Day after day of obstinate and bloody
fighting were followed by nights of weary marching.
From the Rapidan to Cold Harbor was one continuous
battle-field. The dead and wounded of the army, laid
lengthwise, would have reached the entire distance. In
such times the generals of an army scarcely know what
rest is. They must direct actual fighting, accompany
their troops on the march, guard against surprises by the
enemy, plan near operations, and manage the executive
affairs of the army. All this Hancock did while suffering
from a painful and dangerous wound. Now, however, he
was compelled to resign his command for a time. During

his absence his corps was sent on an expedition to destroy the Weldon Railroad, which movement was only partially successful. Our forces were attacked by Hill ; and though the enemy was finally driven off, the corps returned without fully accomplishing its mission. Its losses were about two thousand.

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CHAPTER VIII.

So soon as the state of his health permitted, Hancock returned to his command, where his presence was sorely needed. The gallant Second Corps—the fighting corps of all our armies—was but the shadow of its former self. It had occupied the post of honor and of danger in every engagement since the crossing of the Rapidan, and its losses had been enormous. Its trail was a trail of blood. Disease and fatigue broke down thousands whom the bullet had spared; other thousands went home when their terms of service expired; and day by day the ranks grew thinner. Regiments dwindled to companies, and brigades to the proportions of very small regiments. It is true that recruits were sent forward in great numbers; but alas, they were not the material that Hancock had formerly led. The men who had waited till tempted by \$1000 bounties, and those picked out by the conscription wheel, were not the stuff of which heroes are made. As the eye of the general glanced down his line his heart was heavy. The gallant fellows who had charged into the very jaws of death at Fredericksburg; who had stood rooted to the ground in that bloody corn-field at Antietam, where Hancock first found them; who had faced both ways and fought to front and rear at Chancellorville; who had

rolled back the fiery Southron at Gettysburg and smitten his host as God smote Sennacherib; who had swept over the rebel lines at Spottsylvania and North Anna—where were they? Ah, God! they were gone, the true and the tried; of each it might be said, as was said of another gallant soldier:

Close his eyes, his work is done,—
What to him a friend or foe-man,
Rise of morn or set of sun,
Clasp of man or kiss of woman?

Lay him low
In the clover or the snow.
What cares he? He cannot know!
Lay him low.

The new recruits were entirely undisciplined; but there was little time to teach them even the rudiments of the art of war. The duties of the siege were very severe. The utmost vigilance had to be observed to guard against surprise. Picket and guard duty and the incessant skirmishes and alarms of the siege left little time for drill. Nevertheless, duty must be done; and on the night of July 26 Hancock was started across the James to threaten Richmond from the north side. Lee followed with five divisions, convinced that where Hancock went there was business to be done. This time he was mistaken. Hancock took post at Deep Bottom, a short distance above Malvern Hill, where he employed himself in making demonstrations to amuse Lee. Some little skirmishing was done, but no serious

fighting, as Hancock's business was not to fight, but to keep as large a force as possible away from Petersburg in view of operations which it was hoped would deliver that city into our hands. For some weeks Burnside had been mining the rebel works, and had now dug under a fort near Cemetery Hill. It was proposed, while a large proportion of the garrison was away to watch Hancock, that the mine should be fired, Burnside should rush in, occupy Cemetery Hill and intrench himself there before the enemy could concentrate against him; and, as this hill commanded the town, it was hoped that the siege would thus be practically ended. Early on the morning of July 30, the mine, containing four tons of powder, was exploded; the fort was blown into the air and its garrison of 300 men destroyed. The rebels were paralyzed with fear, and hastily ran out of the works on both sides of the mine. Had the assaulting column moved promptly, as was intended, the whole affair would have been successful. But Burnside was late, as usual. Instead of rushing in at once and taking advantage of the panic within the rebel lines, valuable time was lost, and when the division did advance it halted in the hole made by the explosion, called the crater. A single regiment moved forward toward Cemetery Hill, but, not being supported, it fell back. At length the enemy brought up troops, planted guns, and begun pouring a murderous fire upon the division huddled together in the crater like rats in a hole. A few escaped; but our loss was

about 4,000, of whom nearly one half were made prisoners. The mining operations having failed, Hancock was recalled.

On August 12th Hancock was again sent to the north side of the James. Grant felt that his siege of Petersburg was little more than a farce. He sat on one side of a line of works and Lee sat on the other. Grant received supplies by the James River, Lee received his by railroads. Grant desired to seize Lee's means of communication and thus besiege him in reality; and his design in sending a new expedition to threaten Richmond from the north was to draw away sufficient strength from the garrison to leave him free to make an attempt on the Weldon Railroad, one of the chief sources of the rebel supplies. Accordingly Hancock once more crossed the James and advanced toward Richmond across the old Malvern Hill battle-field. At first it appeared that the rebels had not been deceived into following him, and he made some serious assaults on their lines. The operations, though intended only as a demonstration in force, resulted in pretty hard fighting. Hancock gained some advantages, and carried a portion of the enemy's works; but the purpose his expedition was intended to serve had never been accomplished, and he was once more recalled. His losses in this reconnoissance were about five thousand; those of the enemy were nearly or quite as great.

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tect the rebel capital, Warren moved toward the Weldon Railroad, which he took without much resistance, and fortified himself before Lee could bring to the spot enough troops to drive him off. The gain to our side was not great, however; for Lee continued to receive supplies by the Weldon road, only being compelled to wagon them from Reams Station around Warren's left.

To put a stop to this, Hancock was sent, on the 21st of August, to take Reams Station and to destroy the railroad for a considerable distance south of it. He reached the point indicated, destroyed some property, posted one of his divisions to protect his rear, and with the other two divisions began tearing up the road. The next day he was assailed by Hill in strong force. A severe fight ensued, in which Hill was badly punished; but some of Hancock's new troops did not behave well, and he was compelled to fall back with loss. He called for help; but, though troops lay within four miles of him, none went to his assistance. In the end he was compelled to retire, having lost two thousand men and some guns. Hill's loss was much greater.

No serious attempt was made on either side, for some weeks after the failure of this expedition; but on the 27th of October the Second, Fifth and Ninth Corps moved completely around Lee's right, with intent to cut all his communications south of the Appomattox. It was believed that this would compel Lee to evacuate Petersburg, and possibly Richmond also. The column moved

directly west from the extreme left of our lines, and then faced north. Hancock's intention was to close his right upon the left of Warren, and it was reported that this had been done; but in fact a space of twelve hundred yards had been left unfilled. The ground was swampy and so thickly wooded that it was impossible to know exactly how the troops were posted. Heth's division of Hill's corps, reconnoitering our position, stumbled upon this gap, and got upon Hancock's flank before they were observed, and before they themselves knew of their peculiar situation. But on discovering our men, the rebels charged our flank and doubled up a brigade of Mott's division. Hancock instantly sent Egan's brigade to charge Heth; but Egan had already moved on his own responsibility, concluding, like the good soldier he was, that the best thing to do when he saw his enemy was to attack him. Thus the flankers found themselves flanked, and Heth was driven back with considerable loss.

Grant now sent word to Hancock to take command of the whole movement, and to act as in his judgment seemed best. Hancock was fully aware of the importance of the stake for which he was playing; but he knew also the perils of his position. He might gain everything; capture all Lee's lines of communication south of the Appomattox, and so compel the evacuation of Petersburg; and he might, on the other hand, have his own communications with the army severed, be overwhelmed by

numbers, and compelled to capitulate. His ammunition was insufficient for continued operations; he knew that a strong force was gathering in his front; the ground was difficult for offensive operations and favorable to the enemy; and the troops under his command were not the best in the world. Reluctantly — very reluctantly — he decided to abandon the enterprise; and the forces engaged in it returned to the lines in front of Petersburg. Our losses in this expedition were one thousand five hundred; those of the enemy two thousand to two thousand five hundred.

There was little more fighting in front of Petersburg. The armies settled down in their Winter quarters. There was continuous skirmishing and picket-firing and a great deal of cannonading; but movements of troops on a large scale were suspended. In the Spring, Grant determined to make one more desperate attempt to carry the enemy's works. Lee, however, did not await his assault, but hastily quitted the beleaguered city, and marched to join Johnston. He would then have a hundred thousand men, but he would find himself wedged in between Grant on the north and Sherman, now rapidly approaching from the south. He probably hoped to be able to attack and beat one of these antagonists before the other could come up. But certain provision trains which he counted on taking with him had been ordered by Jeff. Davis to Richmond, and Lee found himself without supplies. His army broke up, and being vigorously pursued, the portion

which remained with him surrendered at Appomattox Court House.

In these closing scenes of the struggle, Hancock did not take part. On November 26, 1864, he was recalled to Washington, with orders to recruit a veteran corps for service on other fields. Before that duty could be performed the war was brought to a close, and the strife which had cost the country a million lives and many thousands of millions of accumulated wealth, ended in a restoration of the Union as it was, except that involuntary servitude was blotted out of existence. The vast hosts of armed men returned to the pursuits of peace, and the disunited sections agreed to "shake hands across the bloody chasm," and to repair so far as they could the evil effects of the fratricidal conflict.

A small army was needed for protection against Indians; and in this Hancock decided to remain. Only a few of the many gallant leaders who had gained prominence in the struggle, could in the reorganized army receive positions at all commensurate with their abilities or their rank in the volunteer service. Grant and Sherman, the commanders of the two great armies, were, of course, made General and Lieutenant General. Hancock stood among the next in rank, and was made a Major General. He was at first given command over the Central Military Department; then over that of Louisiana and Texas, where the utmost firmness and prudence were required. From 1870 to 1872 he commanded the Depart-

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ment of Dakota; and in the year last named, on the
death of General Meade, he was removed to the Depart-
ment of the East, with headquarters at New York, where
he remains at present.

CHAPTER IX.

In politics Hancock is a Democrat. But during the war he continually urged that party lines should be abandoned. The war was a war for the Union; and that issue was of such transcendent importance that a patriotic man could, he thought, waste no time for mere partisan squabbles. When the country itself was in danger of going to pieces, the first duty was to restore it to peace and prosperity; then would come the time to consider who were the best men to hold office.

In the Democratic National Convention held in New York in 1868, Hancock was urged for the presidential nomination. On the eighteenth ballot he received 144½ votes, the largest number given any candidate except Pendleton, who on the twelfth ballot had received 145½ votes. But on the twenty-second, Horatio Seymour was nominated by the unanimous voice of the Convention.

Hancock is famed for his hospitality. He entertains in princely style, a habit his ample fortune permits him to indulge in to his heart's content. He may almost be said to keep open house at his headquarters on Governor's Island. He is well read, has a fine critical taste in literature, and is a writer of no mean ability. In his personal appearance he is fortunate. Not a few of his friends

claimed for him that he was the finest looking soldier in the army.

His success as a soldier resulted almost entirely from his personal qualities and his eminent fitness to command. The leading point in his character is his ability to take in all the details of a situation at a single glance; to decide instantly what should be done, and to give the necessary orders without a moment's hesitation. This all-comprehending vision is the first requisite of a soldier. "The chess-board," said Napoleon at a peculiar juncture of affairs, "is very much tangled; it is I only who see through it." Hancock saw through the intricacies of the game at a glance. At Williamsburg, after seizing the works on the rebel left he was ordered back; Sumner feared that he would be isolated and captured. But Hancock saw, what Sumner did not know, that the point taken commanded the whole rebel position, and he took the responsibility of refusing to obey orders—a grave responsibility; but the event justified him. At Cold Harbor Warren took the responsibility of not fighting when ordered. Swinton says that after orders had been received to attack the rebel works, protected by abattis, flanked by impassable swamps, lined with skilled marksmen, and their front swept by a hundred guns, as the General rode down his lines he saw the men preparing for action with their accustomed alacrity; but they were writing their names on slips of paper which they pinned to their blouses, that their bodies might be recognized when the

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fight was over. It was too much; the men were willing to be led to certain death; but Warren was not willing to lead them there, and he refused to obey his orders. At Gettysburg Hancock had scarce reached the ground when he decided that the battle ought to be fought there and not at any other place. A single glance told him everything. His eyes swept along Cemetery Ridge from Culp's Hill to Round Top; and, without wasting a single moment in examining the details of the position, he notified Meade of the conclusions he had reached, and began to post the troops.

His judgment is equal to this intuition. He reluctantly decided not to press the advantage gained on Lee's right at Petersburg, in October, 1864. But we have not found a military critic to condemn his action. But this is the solitary instance in his military history when he declined to meet the enemy on anything like equal terms. He generally marched toward the battle-field. "I always know where to find Hancock," said Grant. The importance of the two qualities mentioned—his instant perception and his excellent judgment—may be appreciated from the number of instances in which he saved the army from disaster. At Williamsburg his seizure of the earthworks near Fort Magruder compelled the rebels to evacuate the position they had held. At Glendale, when Stonewall Jackson was endeavoring to rejoin Lee and thus unite the rebel army against half of ours, Hancock stood like a lion in the way, and the Stonewall Division found "no

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ncock stood like a
ivision found "no

thoroughfare" there. If Jackson's way had not been barred the consequences would have been disastrous. Hancock was thanked in general orders for conspicuous gallantry in that engagement. At Chancellorville he averted disaster at a most critical moment. At Gettysburg he proved himself the savior of the army no less than three times. And it was only his magnificent fighting at the Wilderness and at Spottsylvania that enabled Grant to pull through on those terrible days without positive defeat.

Hancock is eminently a leader of men. His presence animates and inspires his soldiers. They recognize in him the commander who is determined to have a soldier's duty from a soldier; but also the general who knows what he asks of men and who never requires impossibilities. Above all, they recognize their moral and intellectual superior, whose will-power moves the machine. It is this native power—the power which made the old Greek heroes "kings of men"—which fills up and rounds out the soldierly character. The battle-field is a crucial test. Sham and pretence go for little there. A man may as well pat the padding of his coat and call it his heart, as to look for mere assumption to bear him through when armies meet in the dread shock and savagery of war. In that very whirl and hell of destruction Hancock rose to his grandest heights. A cup of tea or a bottle of wine brings out all the reserved power a little man has stored away; a battle-field only can bring up from their depths the ultimate capabilities of a great soldier.

America will hold the name of Hancock in grateful remembrance; and the world will rank him among the hard fighters — the Cromwells, the Neys, the Murats, the Stonewall Jacksons — who believed that war was a thing of terrible earnestness, and that blows are no blows unless struck with intent to hurt. He has not yet been called to lead armies; but where he has had an opportunity to display generalship he has shown high ability. But he will be remembered as the hard hitter, the strong fighter, to whom his countrymen may point as to a paladin among gallant knights, without fear and without reproach; one whose deeds our children and our children's children will read with admiration and pride; whose achievements history will delight to record: and whose memory posterity will preserve in her muster-roll of men who have deserved well of their country. And the genius of fame in after years will garland his brow with laurel, and, pointing to the name of HANCOCK, will "say to all the world, This was a MAN!"

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